

N^o 14

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

CATHEDRAL of *Gloucester*,

O N

SUNDAY, *July* the 18th, 1714.

A T T H E

A S S I Z E S

H E L D B Y

Mr. Baron *PRICE*.

By R O B E R T B U L L, One of the
Prebendaries of *Gloucester*.

L O N D O N :

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J. Leake

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To the G E N T L E M E N of the
Grand-Jury for the County of Glou-
cester, at the Affizes held for the said
County, by Mr. Baron P R I C E, on
Saturday the 17th of July, 1714.

V I Z.

Edmund Chamberlayne,	} Esqrs. {	David Hughes, Esq;	} Gent.
Thomas Trye,		Samuel Saunders,	
John Blanch,		John Hopton,	
Richard Osborn,		William Merrick,	
Richard Morgan,		John Still,	
Stephen Baldwyn,		Edmund Bond,	
William Bayley,		John Holder Bayse,	
Jo. Chamberlayne,			

G E N T L E M E N,

S I N C E you were pleased to take Notice of
the following Discourse in so Extraordinary
a Way, I think my self under an absolute
Necessity of making it Publick, That You, and
the World may see, that the Censure you pass'd
upon it, was both Unjust, and without Reason;
and the Information that was given you, Ground-
less and Malicious. This, I am satisfy'd, will ap-
pear to every unprejudiced Reader, when he com-
pares the Sermon, with the Presentment you de-
liver'd to Mr. Baron Price, upon Wednesday the
21st of this Instant July, which is as follows:

" We Present Robert Bull, Rector of Tortworth,
" and one of the Prebendaries of Gloucester, for
" that He, on Sunday last, in the Cathedral
A 2 Church

ij DEDICATION.

“ Church of Gloucester, Preached a Sermon, tend-
 “ ing much to Sedition, and to the Disturbance of Her
 “ Majesty's Subjects : In his Sermon, He the said
 “ Mr. Bull, reflecting upon Her Majesty for making
 “ the Peace ; and upon Her Ministry, as having an
 “ Intention to introduce POPERY ; and endea-
 “ vouring to infuse Jealousies amongst Her Majesty's
 “ Subjects.

GENTLEMEN,

Tho' this is a General Charge, yet it is a very
 Heavy one ; and if it could, with any manner of
 Justice, be fasten'd upon me, I should not only
 bear it with the utmost Patience, but think my
 self utterly unworthy of a Place in that Sacred
 Order, of which (I must with Grief and Confu-
 sion own) I am but too unworthy a Member. But
 since the View I propos'd to my self, was so far
 from what is suggested, give me leave to vindicate
 my self from those gross Misrepresentations, which
 if suffer'd to pass in the World, without Contra-
 diction, must for ever fix an indelible Blot on my
 Name.

The Reader will, without question, be very
 much surprized, when upon reading your Present-
 ment, and the Discourse that occasion'd it, he
 finds so little room, for so Severe an Accusation ;
 and lest he should impute it to any Defect in your
 Apprehensions, or to some other Cause as *Bad or*
Worse than that, I think my self obliged so far to
 vindicate you, as to acquaint him, that but One
 (if one of you) *was present to hear it* ; and that the
 Information you took against me *was not taken up-*

DEDICATION.

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end- on Oath; of the Truth of both which Things I
Her am able to make a Legal Proof. It may not be
said improper also to let him know, that you are all of
king you *Gentlemen*, who would be thought to have a
g an very Tender Regard for the Interest of the *Church*
adea- of *England*, and the whole Body of its *Clergy*; of
esty's which he must needs be thoroughly convinced,
when he sees with what Tendernefs, Justice, and
Generosity you handle the Reputation of a Clergy-
man.

very Pardon me, *Gentlemen*, if upon this Occasion,
er of I exprefs my self with some Indignation; and if
only I do not fit down quietly under such Imputations,
k my as must render me obnoxious to the *Government*,
acred as well as unfit for the Society of all Good Men;
onfu- and think it not strange, if I complain of a Proce-
e. But dure, which I am confident You would not have
so far sed to the vilest Malefactor, to a *Ravisher* or a
licate *Murderer*. For would you condemn even *such an*
which One, without giving him a fair Hearing? or find
ontra- a Bill against him without the Oath of at least one
on my or more credible Witnesses? I am verily persuaded,
that you would not. Why then should you (You
e very who profess your selves Friends and Supporters of
esent- the *Clergy*) attack the Reputation of a Clergy-
t, he man in so Furious a Manner, and endeavour to ren-
ation; der him for the future altogether unqualified to
n your discharge the Duties of his Function? For what
Bad or Service can a Man do to the Church of God, who
far to is supposed to be a *Preacher up of Sedition*, and a
ut One *Disturber of the Publick Peace*? Who is so bold, as
at the in the Pulpit to reflect upon his Sovereign and Her
een up- *Ministry*, and to infuse Jealousies into Her Majesty's
on Subjects?

Subjects? And yet the Charge you have laid against me amounts to all this. But I make no question, but that every impartial Reader, (and even you your selves when you have perused the following Sermon) will find, that it had quite another Tendency; that instead of promoting *Sedition*, and *disturbing Her Majesty's Subjects*, it exhorts them to Peace and Union; instead of *reflecting upon Her Majesty*, it speaks of Her with the utmost Duty and Respect; instead of *infusing Fears and Jealousies into Her Majesty's Subjects*, it was intended to Allay those Fears, and remove those Jealousies, which are but too unhappily propagated among them.

I think it altogether needless to say more in Defence of my self or the following Discourse, only give me leave to detain you from it so long as to assure you, that you now have it, just as it was Preach'd, without adding to, or expunging out of it, one Line, Word, or Syllable. And you and the Candid Reader, will but pardon the Imperfections of Style, and other lesser Defects that may occur to you in reading it, I shall not be at all Sollicitous about any other Censures that already have been, or hereafter may be pass'd upon it. I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Tortworth,
July 30. 1714.

Your Obedient Humble Servant

Robert Bul

Advertisement to the Reader.

I Think it may not be improper to acquaint the Reader, That I have cause to believe this Grand-Jury was pickt on purpose to make this Presentment. For a great many Gentlemen of Quality, who were on the first Pannel, were struck off, and never called; as Edward Stephens, Kinard Delabere, William Bagnot, Tho. Stephens of Lippiat, Esquires, &c. Gentlemen of Known Worth and Untainted Honour, and who, for that reason, were without question laid aside. All those Gentlemen of the first Pannel who lived in my Neighbourhood, were in like manner struck off, and a Tales taken to make up the Number sufficient to go through with the Matter in hand. In the Management of this Business, I have nothing to object against either the High-Sheriff or Under-Sheriff, for neither of them was present; but all Matters were transacted by the Country-Clerk, to whose Dexterity and Address it is that I must chiefly impute the Success of this Affair.

And now having acquainted the Reader with some of the Steps that were taken to procure such a Presentment, he will pardon me, if I insert the following Papers, which are just come to my hands; and this I do with the deepest Sense of Gratitude to those Worthy Gentlemen, who have so generously espoused the Cause of an injured and innocent Person. The first is from the Worshipful the Mayor, Aldermen and Common-council, the other from the Grand-Jury of the City of Gloucester.

Civis

Civit' Glouc. ss.

Ad Commune Concilium ibidem tent' sexto
die Augusti, Anno Regni Domini Nostri
GEORGII Dei Gratia Magnæ Britannia
Franciæ & Hiberniæ Regis, Fidei Defensor
ris, &c. primo, Annoq; Dom. 1714.

*“ Resolved, That the Thanks of this House shall be given
“ to the Reverend Mr. Robert Bull, One of the Preben
“ daries of Gloucester, for the Excellent Sermon, which mo
“ of us heard him Preach on the Affize-Sunday, the 18th of
“ July last, in the Cathedral Church in this City. And that
“ he be desired to Print the same, to convince the Grand
“ Jury of the County of Gloucester how much they were
“ imposed upon by False Information, in Presenting him, for
“ Preaching such a Sermon, which they neither heard, nor was
“ preach'd within their Jurisdiction.*

Stephens, Com' Cler

Civit' Glouc. ss.

*“ WE the Grand Jury of the City of Gloucester, at the
“ General Quarter-Sessions of the Peace, held for the
“ said County, on Monday the 12th Day of July, 1714
“ and thence adjourn'd to the 6th Day of August following
“ do Thank the Reverend Mr. Robert Bull, Prebendary of
“ Gloucester, for the Excellent Sermon which he preach'd
“ on Affize-Sunday last in the Cathedral Church of Glouc
“ cester, before Mr. Baron Price, And do make it our Re
“ quest to him to Print the same,*

*Daniel Collick.
William Haines.
Tho. Carrill.
John Knowles.
Tho. Fletcher.
Jonath. Green.
Tho. Cox.*

*Richard Lane.
Tho. Rogers.
John Collet.
Charles Roberts.
Daniel Palling.
Tho. Jeens.
Henry Wilson.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

CATHEDRAL of *Gloucester*, &c.

P S A L M CXLII. vii.

*He shall not be afraid of evil Tidings, his
Heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*



THE *Psalm*, out of which my Text is taken, is a very Elegant Description, both of the Duty and Privileges, the Virtues and Advantages of the Righteous, and truly Pious Man; which
'are such as do much tend to the Praise
'and Honour of God, who is so exceeding Gracious to all his Servants, that there cannot be greater Happiness, than to be in the Number of them. And therefore this (as the former, and some
B other

other *Psalms* are) is by the *Hebrews* entitled *Hallelujah*, though there be no other express Praising of God in it *.

The Description of the Righteous Man (as I said before) is here mixed, giving an Account partly of his Virtues, partly of his Felicities: Sometimes he tells us, how Good and Excellent, and then presently after, how Blessed and Happy a Man he is; to shew us the near and necessary Connexion that there is between Virtue and Happiness, between Duty and Reward. The Instance of my Text, indeed, contains both together; to have a Mind and Heart fixed, established, and unmoved, at the approach of Evils and Dangers, is both the Good Man's Duty and Propriety, and also his great Happiness.

The Words of the Text are too plain and easy to need any Critical Explication; but the Matter of it is so weighty, that it requires and deserves a more exact Survey. The Thing that *David* here describes is the Righteous Man's Constancy, Evenness, and Unconcernedness of Mind, at the View of approaching Evils and Dangers, proceeding from a fixed Trust in God. *He shall not be afraid of evil Tidings, his Heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.* The same Thing is again express'd in Terms much alike, Ver. 8. *His Heart is Established, he shall not be afraid.*

Now our Business here will be to enquire more distinctly, what is this Constancy, Evenness, and Unconcernedness of Mind, at the News of approaching Dangers, that *David* here speaks of. For in this Case it is easy to fall into Mistakes of no light Consequence, by conceiving that to be our Duty which is

* *Hammond's Annot.*

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a Sin ; or on the other Hand, by thinking that to be a Sin, which is indeed our Duty. To this Enquiry I shall premise this general Observation, viz.

That there is a very wide Difference to be made between such evil Tidings, as relate to a Man's self only, or his own private Concerns ; and such as wherein God's Church, and the Honour and Glory of God are deeply concern'd : The former of which I suppose *David* here chiefly intends. The good Man will be far differently affected in these different Cases ; tho' in both he will not be, or (at least) he ought not to be too much discomposed, or unsettled from his Duty. His own Concerns may slightly touch him ; but the Concerns of God's Church, and of Religion, go nearer to his Heart.

To make this Matter clear, I shall set before you the Example of Good Old *Eli* the Priest. I call him Good, because he was indeed such, though otherwise he had no small Faults, for which *HE*, his Family, and Posterity did dearly smart. In *1 Sam.* 3. 11, 12, 13, 14. God delivers sad and dismal Tidings to the young Prophet *Samuel*, to be convey'd by him to the Ears of *Eli* : The Tidings amount to no less than the utter Ruin of his Family and Posterity. The Words are, *And the Lord said unto Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the Ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that Day I will perform against Eli, all Things which I have spoken concerning his House: When I begin I will also make an end. For I have told him, that I will judge his House for ever, for the Iniquity which he knoweth: Because his Sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto Eli, that the Iniquity of Eli's House, shall not be purged with Sacrifice and Offering for ever.* This is but a short Repetition of what had been before more largely foretold by a Man of God,

Chap. 2. 27, to the end of the Chapter. Let us now see with what an even Mind, with how perfect a Resignation to the Will of God, the Good Old Man receives these dreadful Tidings, *Ver. 18. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him: And he said, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* Thus *Eli* bore the News of those his private Calamities, that yet were the Fruits of God's Displeasure and which he knew also to be the Punishments of his grievous Sin; which is a mighty Aggravation For Guilt, and the Conscience of Sin, is the chief Sting of all Afflictions and Calamities, and that which renders them the most pungent to us. And yet *Eli* because he had repented, and knew, or at least strongly hoped, that God had pardon'd him, and that his Soul, and eternal Concernments were safe, thus calmly receives and submits to the sad Menaces of Temporal Ruin and Destruction to himself and Family. How willingly and chearfully therefore would he have received and entertained the Tidings of other Evils and Afflictions, that were only to have been Tryals of his Fortitude and Patience, and Occasion of obtaining a richer Crown, and a greater Reward.

Thus you see how little *Eli* was concerned and moved at those dismal Tidings that touch'd only himself, and his own private Interest, though with very sad Circumstances. But he was far otherwise affected in the Danger of the Ark of God, and of Religion. When the Ark was foolishly carried out into the Camp by the *Israelites*, as their only Defence against the mighty Army of the *Philistines*, when they had forsaken their God, and their Obedience to him (which would have been their best Defence,) see how mightily *Eli* was concern'd for the great Danger the Ark of God was then in. *1 Sam. 4. 13. Eli sat upon a Seat by the Way-side, watching: for his Heart trembled*

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for the Ark of God. But what an Amazement was it to him, when he heard the dreadful Tidings of the Ark's being taken by the Uncircumcised *Philistines* ! See *Verses* 16, 17, and 18 of the 4th Chapter ; where you will observe, that whilst he heard the News of the Death of his two Sons, he kept his Seat unmoved : but as soon as he heard of the Captivity of the Ark, he presently fainted, and fell backward, and brake his Neck, and died. So vast a Difference is there between a Good Man's Concernment for the Publick, and for his own Private Danger.

But notwithstanding this, it is possible for us to be guilty of a Sinful Excess, even in the Concernment for the Good of God's Church : And this perhaps was Fault of Old *Eli's*, added to his other. He heard that the Ark of God was taken, and then despair'd, and died : As if when the Ark was taken, it had been lost for ever, and God could not recover and redeem it again. But yet this we know he did, and that in a most miraculous Manner, and to the dear loss of the *Philistines*, as you may read in the 5th, 6th, and 7th Chapters.

And are not too many of us guilty of this Folly ? When we hear that Religion is in Danger, we presently bode, that it is lost for ever : And when the Church of God is under Persecution, we straight conclude that it is utterly forsaken. Just as if an ignorant Man, and void of Philosophy, when he sees the Sun under an Eclipse, should pronounce that it should never shine in its former Lustre more. How much more commendable were it for us to imitate the Heroick Courage and Confidence of the Great *Marcellinus*, who when the *Arian* Persecution was most violent against the Catholick Church, thus comforted himself and others : *It is but a little Cloud, that will pass away.* Perhaps it may be our Lot, or our
next

next Posterity's, to bear the Fury and Brunt of such a Storm. But let us hope, that afterwards a joyful Calm and Serenity will follow, that shall fill Men's Hearts with Joy, and their Mouths with Praises to Almighty God. *Christ* hath told us, that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against his Church: and the Experience of above Seventeen hundred Years hath abundantly assured us of the Truth of this Saying. What need we then to fear? Wicked Men and Devils have already tried and used all their Power and Art, and that again and again, to extirpate Christianity; and yet it still remains, and so it shall to the End of the World, in spite of all Opposition.

I grant, the True Reformed Religion may (without any Violation of *Christ's* Promise) shift and change its Quarters; and utterly forsaking our Sinful Island, be planted in some other Nation and Country, that shall bring forth more and better Fruits of it, than we have done. Though it is to be hoped, for many Reasons, that this fatal Judgment will not as yet fall upon us. But if ever it should, we ought so far to deny our selves, and to put off that fond Affection we generally have to our own dear Country, as to be content; and not only so, but to thank and bless God, that the Purity of Religion finds any Reception and Entertainment any-where, though it be in the utmost Borders and Confines of *America*. *May the Will of God be done* must be our last and final Resolution in the worst Extremity of Things. If God be glorified, and the True pure Religion of *Christ* somewhere continued, the Good Man will rejoice, though at the same time he weep bitterly to see his own Country bereft of that her greatest Happiness. In a word, Christianity in general, and in the Substance of it, as it hath

such former Ages hitherto continued, so it shall still
 continue to the End of the World. The Primitive
 Christianity, taught by Christ and his Apostles, and
 for above Three hundred Years retain'd more purely
 in the Churches of Christ, was afterwards indeed for
 some Ages dark'ned with very grievous Superstitions
 and Errors, by degrees creeping into the Christian
 World; so that it was no easy Thing then for an
 honest Man to feel out his Way to Heaven. But
 in God's due Time this Darkness was in many Places
 dispell'd by those shining Lights that God was plea-
 sed to kindle and set up in his Church. And there
 is no doubt but the same Thing may (though God
 forbid it ever should) happen again. The Worse
 than *Egyptian* Darkness of Popery, may once again
 enlight Us and the other Reformed Churches; and
 things seem to have a kind of Tendency to this dis-
 astrous Issue, through the Contentions and Animosities
 that are industriously fomented between some of the
 protestant Princes, and the growing Power of other
 Princes, that are sworn Enemies to the Reformation.
 But if this should happen, yet at length Light will
 again break through the Cloud, and dispel that Dark-
 ness so, as possibly it shall never more return.

Thus you see the far different Concernment, that
 good Men have and ought to have, for the Welfare
 of the Church, and for their own private Interest;
 and that *David* in my Text chiefly respects the latter,
 when he says of the Righteous, *He shall not be afraid of
 evil Tidings*. This general Observation being premi-
 sed, I come now to shew you more distinctly,
 wherein this Unconcernedness of the good Man at
 the News of Evils and Dangers approaching himself
 doth consist. And here I shall proceed, both *Nega-*
tively and *Affirmatively*.

(I.) *Nega-*

(1.) *Negatively.* The good Man's Constancy Evenness and Unconcernedness of Mind at the News of approaching Evils and Dangers, is not a Stupidity of Mind, such as excludes all Foresight and Apprehension of approaching Danger, and all due Care to avoid it. For on the contrary, the Son of *David* expressly tells us, *A prudent Man foreseeth the Evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished*, Prov. 22. v. 3d. Not to foresee Danger, and beware of it when we may, is brutish. But when we see an approaching Danger, not to be sensible or apprehensive of it, is perfect Madness, and worse than Brutishness. For the very Brute Beasts, when they see Danger coming, will use all means they can to shun it; as *Balaam's* Ass would rather turn aside, and crush his Master's Foot, than run upon the Angel's Sword. This Stupidity therefore is not that Constancy of Mind, which *David* intends in my Text.

(2.) Therefore *Affirmatively.* This Constancy of Mind which *David* here recommends as the Propriety and Duty of the Righteous Man, is,

First, Such a Constancy of Mind, as excludes all Amazement, and all such Fear, as betrays the Successors of Reason, as the Son of *Syrach* expresseth. Some Men, when they receive the Tidings of an approaching Danger, (especially if that Danger be presented as greater) are perfectly stunn'd, and are utterly void of Reason and Counsel. They are afraid, and yet take no care to avoid the Things they fear. They make a miserable Outcry of their Danger, but yet never think of Means to shun it. Their Fear vehemently transports them, as that they are quite beside themselves; and if a Man should attempt to advise or comfort them in this Fit, he would unde-

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take as hard a Task, and as ridiculous, as he that should solemnly undertake to Preach a Sermon to the Madmen in *Bedlam*. Does this Discomposure of Spirit become good Men? Is this that Constancy of Mind, which *David* recommends as the Character of a truly Righteous Person? Certainly, No.

(2.) It is such a Constancy of Mind, as excludes all Despondency of Heart, and Dejection of Spirit. No worldly Fear should dismay or dispirit us: As on the other Hand, no glad Tidings relating to this World, should transport us into excessive Joy, or too much lift us up. Neither should Fear shrink our Hearts, nor Joy widen and enlarge them too much. Indeed, they that are guilty of either Extream, easily fall into the other as the Scene changes. But a good Man should be always the same, always of the same even and composed Temper. What a shameful Thing is it to see a Christian, at the News of approaching Dangers, behave himself like a Child, or tremble and faint like a Coward? Hath Christianity taught us no better Things than this? Have we not learned *Christ*? The worst Tidings that Men can bring to our Ears, is Death; for this is the utmost that Man can do unto us. And should Death be so terrible to a Christian? To what Purpose than serve the Promises of Immortality, and a Blessed Life to come, that *Christ* hath given us? It was the Glory of the Christians of Old, that the very Heathens were forced to give them this Commendation, that *the Christians were Despisers of Death*. And is not Christianity still the same Thing? Is not *Jesus Christ* the same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever? Certainly. But we are not the same Christians. We do not live by Faith, and in a continual Meditation of the Blessed Life to come, as They did; Or rather,

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we are not so careful of observing the Precepts of Christ, as they were, and therefore we do not take that Comfort and Courage from the Promises of Christ, as they did: We do not Live, and therefore we cannot Die, like them.

My Brethren, we profess our selves Christians and to believe the Promises of the Gospel; and perswade my self, we do so. But do we duly Consider of what we Believe? If we did, this Faith would work in us a greater Love, and that Love a greater Courage. Remember that excellent Exhortation of St. Peter, 2 Pet. 1. 5. *And besides all this, giving all Diligence, add to your Faith Virtue, i. e. Fortitude.* For the word *ἀρετή*, in the Original, cannot here be taken in its wider Signification for Virtue in General because it is distinguish'd from Faith, which yet is Virtue in that Sense; and it is distinguish'd likewise from many other Virtues, that are presently afterwards named, as *Knowledge, Temperance, Patience*, and the like. It must therefore here needs signify for particular Virtue, *viz. Fortitude or Courage.* So then hence we learn, That a Christian's Faith is imperfect, insufficient, and nothing worth, unless there be added *Fortitude and Courage*, in the Reception and Entertainment of whatsoever Evils and Dangers should approach.

(3.) And lastly. This Constancy excludes troublesome and restless Sollicitude and Anxiety of Mind about future Contingencies and Events. We be in continual Care and Fear concerning what may hereafter happen, is it self the greatest Misery, greater than any we can Fear, or take Occasion of in this World. And therefore, why should we antedate our Miseries? Why should we

over-sollicitous about future Events? Why should we not rather mind the Words of our Saviour, Matt. 6. ver last, *Sufficient to the Day is the Evil thereof.* We should not therefore affright and torment our selves about future Contingencies, but rather turn these our Fears into Prayers to Almighty God, that he would give us Grace to bear whatsoever he shall lay upon us. We should multiply our Prayers, and lessen our Fears, and then we shall receive the same Answer from God, that St. Paul did, 2 Cor. 12. *My Grace is sufficient for thee, for my Strength is made perfect in Weakness.* Let us turn our Fear into a great Diligence in doing our Duty, and then even this ill Fear will tend to our greater Advantage. If we make this our present Care and Business, we may assure our selves, that the God whom we serve, will take care of us, and secure us, as to all future Events. *For God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the Temptation make way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* 1 Cor. 10. As sure as God is faithful (and his Faithfulness is more sure and firm than the Hinges of the heavens, and the Foundations of the Earth) so sure is, That he will never be wanting with his strength and Assistance, to the sincere Christian, when the time of Trial comes: But then we must ever Remember, That this Faithfulness of God, is engaged only to those that are Faithful to him; i. e. that love him heartily, adhere to him closely, pray to him for his Grace earnestly and frequently, and serve him carefully before the time of Tryal comes. It may seem a Paradox, but it is a great Truth, that it is harder to prepare for Suffering, than to suffer. None can be a true Martyr but the mortified Christian, and Mortification is more difficult than

Martyrdom. To crucify the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts thereof; continually to Cross our carnal Appetites; constantly to despise the Pleasures of Sin, which are but for a Season; to be dead unto the World, and as it were unconcerned about the Things thereof; to have our Conversation in Heaven, and to live in the daily Meditation of the Life to come. This is the great and most difficult Work. All that follows, even Martyrdom it self, will be easy when this is effected. And therefore let this be our greatest Care, and then we need not be Sollicitous what we shall do in time of Tryal. *Wherefore lift up the Hands that hang down, and the feeble Knees: and make straight Paths for your Feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the Way; but let it rather be healed;* as the Divine Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* speaks, Chapter 12. ver. 12, 13. Let us not torment our selves with the Thoughts how we shall bear such exquisite Pains, but lift up our Eyes to Heaven, and view the Noble Army of Martyrs there triumphing in Glory. Among them we shall find many of the weaker Sex, many tender Women, and younger Persons, not much advanced above Childhood, who have been able thro' God's Grace to pass the fiery Tryal, and who are now rewarded with a Crown of Glory. We are not to imagine but that many of these, have been perplex'd with as timorous Apprehensions before their Sufferings, as any that can assault us. But they found God faithful to them in their greatest Extremities, and so shall we, if like them, we devote our selves wholly to the Service of our Redeemer. It is beyond our Ability fully to conceive or imagine what Means God can so comfort and support his faithful Servants in the midst of such Sufferings: yet we may in some measure comprehend this extraordinary Dispensation of Providence, if we remember

er that there are Millions of good and officious Spi-
rits (I mean the Holy Angels) whose very Business
and Office it is to *minister unto them who shall be heirs of*
Salvation, Heb. 1st. ver. last; *i. e.* to wait and tend
upon good Men, especially in their extreme Necessi-
ties. These Wise and Mighty Spirits, can find out
Ways that we think not of, to rescue us from the in-
venious Malice of Tyrants and Persecutors. When
the Three Children were in the fiery Furnace, there
was seen a *fourth Person like unto the Son of God*; *i. e.* a
good Angel from the Son of God to assist and help
them, *Dan. 3.* ver. 25. When our Saviour was in his
most and most bitter Agony, there appeared an Angel
unto him, *strengthening him*; as you may read, *Luke 22.*
ver. 43. We are not to imagine that our Saviour did
need this; but he underwent this Dispensation for
examples sake, and to assure all his faithful Disciples,
that they shall not want an Angel from Heaven, to
comfort and support them in their greatest Extremity.
Stephen, the first Martyr, when he came before the
Jews to witness a good Confession, saw to his Com-
fort and Encouragement *Jesus Christ* standing at the
right-hand of God for his Defence; and thereupon
when it rained Stones upon him, and every malici-
ous Hand pelted at him, and he was now oppressed
and ready to sink under the Fury of the *Jews*, and just
dying; he was so composed in Spirit, that he was
able to pray heartily, not only for his own Soul, but
also for Mercy to his very Murderers, as you see, *Acts 7.*
from the 55th Verse, to the End of that Chapter.
It is and if need be, when we come to the Time of Tryal,
God will shew us also such a blessed Sight, rather than
leave us to faint and sink under our Sufferings.

From

From what has been said, you see, that if it were our Misfortune to be reduced to the like Calamities: yet if we faithfully discharge our Duty to God, and with Confidence commit our selves to his gracious Protection, we have all the Reason in the World to believe, that he would comfort and support us under them. But God be praised, we as yet enjoy our Religion in Peace and Quietness, and have no Reason to despair, but that this Mercy will still be continued to us.

There was a Time indeed (and many that are here present have Cause to remember it) when Popery was coming on us with an High Hand, when the Danger was thought to be so certain that no Humane Power could rescue us from it, and when every Man was preparing himself to suffer those Calamities which he saw so very near him. But yet at that Time, even when we were upon the very Brink of Destruction, the Merciful God raised us up a Deliverer, who snatch'd us from the Jaws of Death, confirm'd to us our tottering Liberties, and fix'd them upon their Ancient and Solid Foundations. How thankful should we be to God for such a Mercy, and how precious ought the Memory of it to be for ever to us! 'Tis to that glorious Instrument of Providence, that we owe the Invaluable Happiness we at present enjoy under our most Pious and Religious Queen from whom we have received so many Assurances of the greatest Zeal to the Church of *England*, and most tender Regard to the Protestant Interest in general, that we have all the Reason in the World to believe (and as much to rejoice in that Belief) that these inestimable Blessings will be continued to us, while so glorious a Light continues to shine and dart its benign and comfortable Influence upon us. But then

On the other Hand, we have no small Cause to fear, that when God out of his Wrath shall please to deprive us of so watchful a Guardian, that Light may be succeeded by as great a Darknes, and our present Sun-shine by a sad Obscurity. We have the same Enemies still hovering over us: The Court and Church of Rome, greedily Thirsting for our Destruction; a Pretender to Her Majesty's Crown, arm'd and ready at hand to second all their execrable Designs; and a Foreign Power, which (though at present it may seem to be lull'd asleep by the Charms of Peace) did never yet want an Inclination, but an Opportunity to impose him on us. And if it should please God, for our many and great Sins, to give us this dreadful Cup of his Vengeance to drink, what Confusion, Ruin, and Desolation, may we not expect? But I will not insist longer on this Subject, lest I should thwart my own Intentions, and Increase in you those Fears which I am endeavouring to Allay.

Wherefore to conclude; that we may either prevent so heavy a Judgment, or qualify our selves for the Divine Grace to support us under it, let us every one in particular repent us of our former Sins; especially that heinous Sin of Ingratitude to God, and the happy Instruments of his Providence, which is now become a crying Sin of this Nation: Let us for the future discharge our Duty to God with greater Zeal and Faithfulness: Let us be Obedient to our Governors, who watch over us for our Good: ~~Let us live~~ in Peace one with another, laying aside all those unreasonable Heats and Jealousies, which are so destructive, both of our Own Ease and the Publick Safety; and let us unite together as one Man, for the Defence and Security of the Protestant Religion, and Succession, as it is now by Law established; which

can no other way be preserved than by Peace and Union, and a conscientious Observation of those Solemn Oaths and Obligations, by which we have so many times bound our selves to maintain and support it. In a word ; let us live Lives worthy of that Holy Religion we profess, and then let us trust in God, and fear nothing that may happen to us for the future ; so shall we fetch out the Mark of *David's Good Man* in the Text, who *is not afraid of evil Tidings, having his heart fixed, trusting in the Lord.*

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour and Glory, Adoration and Praise, both now and for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.



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